

IN THE SPECIFICATION

At page 1, please amend the title to read:

-- THIRD PARTY CREDIT ACCOUNT --

At page 1, please amend the CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION
to read:

-- CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a Divisional of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/876,929 filed June 16, 1997, which, in turn, is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/585,173 filed April 16, 1996. The disclosures of both applications are incorporated herein by reference. --

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-28, without prejudice.

Please add the following claims:

- 29. A system for transferring funds to third party recipients, comprising:
a controller processor programmed:

- (a) to process data;
- (b) to create for each third party recipient a customer account file;
- (c) to transfer funds from customer account files to transferees selected by said third party recipients, in response to command instructions; and
- (d) to automatically provide to fund depositors periodic information on fund transfers from customer account files;

a data storage device associated with said controller processor in which file records of said customer account files created by said controller processor are stored, including information on the amounts of funds deposited for said third party recipient by fund depositors, and information on customer account file transferees and corresponding payment amounts; and

an output device for periodically supplying to fund depositors said information on customer account transferees and corresponding payment amounts.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein said fund transfer command instructions include a command instruction for a cash withdrawal payment to be electronically transferred to said third party recipient.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein the input device for said cash withdrawal payment command instruction is an ATM machine to which said cash withdrawal payment is electronically transferred and issued.

32. The system of claim 29, wherein said fund transferee selected by said third party recipient is a merchant or service provider providing goods or services to said third party recipient, and said command instructions include a command instruction for an electronic funds transfer to said fund transferee to pay for said goods or services.

33. The system of claim 32, wherein the input device for said third party command instruction is a point-of-sale transaction device.

34. The system of claim 29, wherein said controller processor is programmed to process and store information in said storage device for each customer account, in response to command instructions from fund depositors, designating the classes of goods and services on which the deposited funds may be spent; and to process fund transfer command instructions issued by said third party recipients by determining whether the classes of goods or services for which the fund transfer has been requested have been designated by said fund depositors.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein said controller processor is programmed to process and store information in said storage device for each customer account, in response to command instructions from fund depositors, limiting the amount of funds that may be spent on particular classes of goods and services; and to process fund transfer command instructions issued by said third party recipients by determining whether the requested funds exceed the limit set for said goods or services to be purchased.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein said fund transferee that may be limited includes said third party recipient.

37. The system of claim 35, wherein said limit is a periodic limit.

38. The system of claim 29, further comprising a magnetic card encoded with an identifier correlated to said customer account.

39. The system of claim 29, wherein said customer account is a bank or credit account established in advance in the name of said customer by said fund depositor.

40. The system of claim 34, wherein said goods or services comprise books, computer software, food, lodging or entertainment.

41. The system of claim 29, wherein said controller processor is programmed to process command instructions from said depositor transferring funds to said customer account periodically.

42. The system of claim 29, wherein said customer account file comprises a primary deposit file into which the amount of funds deposited is recorded, and a secondary deposit file into which at least a portion of the deposited funds may be allocated by said controller processor for use by said third party recipient in response to command instructions

issued by said depositor, and said funds transferred from said customer account file to transferees in response to command instructions from said third party recipients are transferred from said secondary deposit file.

43. A system for transferring funds to third party recipients comprising:
a controller processor programmed:

- (a) to process data;
- (b) to create for each third party recipient a customer account file;
- (c) to transfer funds from customer account files to transferees selected by said third party recipients, in response to command instructions; and
- (d) to process command instructions from depositors to transfer funds periodically to customer account files;

an input device for supplying command instructions to said controller processor; and
a data storage device associated with said controller processor in which file records of customer account files created by said controller processor are stored, including information on the amounts of funds deposited periodically for said third party recipients by fund depositors.

44. The system of claim 43, wherein said controller processor is programmed to process command instructions from depositors transferring funds to customer account files weekly or monthly.

45. The system of claim 43, wherein said customer account file records in said data storage device includes information on customer account file transferees and corresponding payment amounts; said controller processor is programmed to provide automatically to fund depositors said information on fund transfers from customer account files; and said system further comprises an output device for supplying to said depositors said transfer information.

46. The system of claim 43, wherein said controller processor is programmed to process and store information in said storage device for each customer account, in response to command instructions from fund depositors, designating the classes of goods and services on which the deposited funds may be spent; and to process fund transfer command instructions issued by said third party recipients by determining whether the classes of goods or services for which the fund transfer has been requested have been designated by said fund depositors.

47. The system of claim 46, wherein said goods or services comprise books, computer software, food, lodging or entertainment.

48. The system of claim 46, wherein said controller processor is programmed to process and store information in said storage device for each customer account, in response to command instructions from fund depositors, limiting the amount of funds that may be spent on particular classes of goods and services; and to process fund transfer command instructions issued by said third party recipients by determining whether the requested funds exceed the limit set for said goods or services to be purchased.

49. The system of claim 48, wherein said limit is a periodic limit.

50. The system of claim 48, wherein said goods or services comprise books, computer software, food, lodging or entertainment.

51. The system of claim 43, wherein said customer account file comprises a primary deposit file into which the amount of funds deposited is recorded, and a secondary deposit file into which at least a portion of the deposited funds may be allocated by said controller processor for use by said third party recipient in response to command instructions issued by said depositor, and said funds transferred from said customer account file to transferees in response to command instructions from said third party recipients are transferred from said secondary deposit file.

52. A computer-based method for transferring funds for use by third parties comprising:

creating for each third party a customer account file containing a record of funds deposited by a depositor for use by each third party;

storing a file record of information in a customer account file on every fund transfer executed by a third party therefrom, including information on the transferee and the corresponding payment amount; and

providing automatically to the customer account file depositor a periodic itemized statement generated from said file record of information on fund transfers executed by said third party.

53. The method of claim 52, further including the steps of:

limiting the classes of goods and services on which funds in a customer account file may be spent in response to command instructions from the fund depositor; and

verifying each transfer from said customer account file requested by said third party to determine whether the goods or services to be purchased have been authorized.

54. The method of claim 53, wherein said goods or services comprise books, computer software, food, lodging or entertainment.

55. The method of claim 52, further comprising the steps of:

limiting the amount of funds in a customer account file that may be spent on particular classes of goods and services in response to command instructions from the fund depositor; and

verifying each transfer from said customer account file requested by said third party to determine whether the requested funds exceed the limit set for the transferee or for the goods or services to be purchased.

56. The method of claim 55, wherein said goods or services comprise books, computer software, food, lodging or entertainment.

57. The method of claim 55, wherein said limit is a periodic limit.

58. The method of claim 52, wherein said funds are deposited periodically.

59. The method of claim 52, wherein said step of creating a customer account file comprises the steps of:

creating a primary deposit file containing a record of funds deposited by said depositor for allocation to at least one third party;
creating a secondary deposit file accessible by a third party; and
transferring to said secondary deposit file in response to command instructions from said depositor at least a portion of the funds deposited in said primary deposit file, representing deposited funds of use by said third party.

60. A computer-based method for transferring funds to third parties comprising:
creating for each third party a customer account file containing a record of funds deposited by a depositor for use by each third party; and
periodically depositing funds into a customer account file in response to command instructions from said fund depositor.

61. The method of claim 60, wherein said funds are deposited weekly or monthly.

62. The method of claim 60, wherein said funds are deposited automatically.

63. The method of claim 60, further comprising the steps of:
limiting the classes of goods and services on which funds in a customer account file may be spent; and
verifying each transfer from said customer account file requested by the third party to determine whether the goods or services to be purchased are authorized.

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64. The method of claim ~~63~~⁵, wherein said goods or services comprise books, computer software, food, lodging or entertainment.

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65. The method of claim ~~60~~³ further comprising the steps of:
limiting the amount of funds in a customer account file that may be spent on particular classes of goods and services in response to command instructions from the fund depositor; and

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verifying each transfer from said customer account file requested by the third party to determine whether the requested funds exceed the limit set for the transferee or for the goods or services to be purchased.

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66. The method of claim ~~65~~⁷, wherein said limit is a periodic limit.

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67. The method of claim ~~66~~⁰¹⁶²³ further comprising the step of storing information on fund transferees and corresponding payment amounts for a customer account.

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68. The method of claim ~~67~~¹⁰ further comprising the step of automatically supplying to the fund depositor said information on fund transferees and corresponding payment amounts.

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69. The method of claim ~~68~~¹¹, wherein said supplying step is performed periodically.

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70. The method of claim ~~65~~⁷, wherein said goods or services comprise books, computer software, food, lodging or entertainment.

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71. The method of claim ~~60~~⁰¹⁶²³ wherein said step of creating a customer account file comprises the steps of:

creating a primary deposit file containing a record of funds deposited by said depositor for allocation to at least one third party;